Tom Wright

SASQUATCH: MYSTERY AND LEGEND

Timid and shy... still retreating from the destructive forces of man—perhaps they still walk the earth as they did one million years ago

By Richard Smedley

Seattle, Oregon—Robert Morgan, director of the American Yeti Expedition, has announced the discovery of "human hair" found in association with tremendous man-like footprints. Located in a remote area near Mt. St. Helens, the hair has undergone micro-biological analysis and has been certified human.

It started with a search for the legendary Sasquatch or Bigfoot in the Northwest region of America. Morgan led a group of distinguished scientists and trackers through the heavily forested wilderness. As two of the trackers were crossing a stream, they noticed an "extremely fresh" scuff mark on a moss-covered rock. The hair samples were taken from that rock.

The searchers reasoned that something apparently heard the trackers coming, and fled. It went up the stream about 20 yards, then circled left, above the trackers.

Mary Joe Florey, a micro-biologist in Portland, examined the hair and concluded it was of human origin, from the lower extremities—probably a leg or ankle.

It has been suggested in the past that Sasquatch is some type of ape. Now, Morgan says, this hair could eventually lead to scientific proof that Sasquatch is human.

"If it was a Bigfoot, then it opens up many new doors." It might suggest a mutation in a previously unknown human evolutionary link.

In the great Yosemite Valley, the mist hangs against the mountains as if to hide visions of the past that time has not been able to obscure as it marches ever onward. It seems that if you only stare long enough and hard enough, you could perhaps perceive things that happened once, long ago, within the rock-bound valley.

It was here within this valley, near Bridlevale Falls, that a party of miners discovered what was to become the mystery of the decade. The year . . . 1895. The month . . . July.

While having lunch, Mr. G.F. Martindale who was in charge of a party of miners, noticed a pile of stones that was placed against the wall of a cliff. Being familiar with the natural formation of rock, this particular grouping struck Mr. Martindale as being unusual and seemed

Illustration by Tom Wright

The corpse was wrapped in what appeared to be animal skins and covered with a layer of fine grey powder. The miners removed parts of the animal skins to view the corpse and found it to be that of a woman holding a child to her breast.

not to have been placed naturally. Realizing that if something in the wild is not placed naturally, he could only conclude that it was placed there by human hands.

The miners set about removing the pile of stones. Behind the pile they found a wall of rock that had been shaped and joined together with knowledgeable masonry. The joints between the rocks were all of a uniform 1/8" thickness, and according to the reports of the men there, were a beautiful job of stone work.

"As pretty as any wall on any building that I have ever seen" is the way one miner described it.

"Its head was human, although more slanted, with a large forehead and broad nostrils."

Thinking that they had perhaps stumbled upon some lost treasure, the party proceeded without delay and with much haste tearing down the wall to get to the incredible riches that must lie within.

Disappointment fell, a heavy weight upon their heads, as upon completion they found the vault empty save a large mummified corpse which lay on a ledge carved from the natural stone for the express purpose of burial.

Lighting their carbide head lamps they set about examining the vault to see if perhaps they had overlooked something, perhaps a map or some other clue to where the inevitable treasure might be hidden.

What they found was a vault that had been carved from natural rock—9 feet 3 inches high, 18 feet 6 inches deep and 8 feet 4 inches wide—containing a mummified corpse that was 6 feet 8 inches long!

The corpse was wrapped in what appeared to be animal skins and covered with a layer of fine grey powder. The miners removed parts of the animal skins to view the corpse and found it to be that of a woman holding a child to her breast.

The mummy was then taken to Los Angeles where it was placed before men of science, most of whom agreed that it was a relic of a race that must have inhabited this country long before the American Indian. All agreed that the height of 6 feet 8 inches in death must have represented a height in life of about seven or more feet. If their height relationship between men and women was approximately what it is today, then the males of the species would have been some eight feet tall!

The most popular theory of the day was that the lady was a relic of some royal family of a lost stone age tribe.

Captains Cooke and Magellan both wrote in their ship's logs of a race of giants that inhabited what we now know as the Pacific coast of South America. Cooke was even supposed to have captured one of the giants, reported to be nine feet tall. Unfortunately, the giant escaped by breaking the ropes that bound him to the mast and jumped overboard. Cooke wrote in his log that he himself, was 6 feet 2 inches tall (which was very tall for those days when the average was about 5 feet 4 inches) and he could easily stand under the arm of the giant. Cooke's reports started a furor that was to last another 100 years and cause many to go seeking the giants. In the next century, many reports were filed stating that various captains has sighted the giants of what was then called Patagonia—but none made contact, or for that matter even attempted to capture one of the giant men.

Then suddenly around 1650, the reports of sighting giants along the coast stopped abruptly. Perhaps the giants moved inland, perhaps because they moved far away. They could have just vanished. They could have simply become unpopular attractions, and thus slipped gradually into oblivion. The fact remains that once they were there.

The Yosemite valley, where the mummy was found, has always been considered to be a place of great mystery by the Indians who lived there, the Ahwahneechees. The folklore of the Awahneechees relates a story of a giant who came into the valley long before the white man arrived. The giant's name was Oo-el-en and he was a vicious giant, for he liked to eat the Indians. He would catch the adults and carry them away to a hiding place near the foot of Cascade Falls. Oo-el-en would then cut the people into small pieces, hanging their meat in the sun to dry into jerky. The legend says that the Ahwahneechees finally killed the giant and burned his body. This rules out the possibility that the giant mummy of Yosemite might have been Oo-el-en. However if there was a giant, where did he come from, was there more than one, was there a female of the species? We may never know—all the Ahwahneechees are dead, the last having died in 1947.

The one thing the Ahawhneechees did leave was a written record of their long and complex burial rites.

These Indians usually burned their dead, as they believed that by doing so they released the spirit of the deceased more quickly, so as to escape the evil spirits that lie in wait to grab it.

The important part of the ritual, in relationship to the mummy of the Yosemite, was that they always wrapped their dead in the skins of animals, before they were burned. If you recall, the mummy of the Yosemite was wrapped in the skins of animals and covered with a fine grey powder. Ashes perhaps?

The scientists of the day (1895) all agreed that the mummy predated the Christian era. It is therefore doubtful that the mummy was in any way connected with the Indians, as they were believed to have settled in the Yosemite valley about 800 to 1000 years ago. The Ahwahneechees were also a very small people, most being under 5 feet 3 inches tall.

However, there have been traces of a much earlier people that have inhabited the Southwest. This fact was pointed out dramatically in 1866 by a miner named Mattison. (No real discoveries have been made since that time by any one other than qualified archaeologists, because it was about that time the advent of mechanized mining began.) Mattison, from Angels Camp, California, found a skull almost 130 feet underground, in a shaft of his mine in Calavaras County. The discovery shook the foundations of Genesis itself. What intrigued Mr. Mattison was why an Indian would dig a grave that deep in the ground, when most were buried at about six feet. He knew the skull belonged to a very old Indian because it was fossilized and encrusted with the same kind of gravel distinctive to the earth in the mine shaft. He took it to one of the bars in Angels Camp on his next trip to town. There, he came across a doctor who told Mattison that if it was an Indian, it was a deformed one. The doctor pointed out the heavy brow

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Photo courtesy of Richard Smedley

sasquatch

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which ran across the eyes and nose, he pointed several other differences in the cranium between this and other Indian skulls of a more contemporary period, which were occasionally dug up around the mining camps.

The unknown doctor prevailed upon Mattison to report the find to Mr. J.D. Whitney, a geologist for the State of California. Although Whitney knew nothing about skulls, he was an excellent geologist, and when shown the gravel-encrusted skull, he checked it with the gravel in its burial place and found the two to match. The skull had been found under four strata of lava and three strata of gold-bearing gravels. Thus, Whitney reported, it probably had been buried near the end of the Pliocene Era—a million years earlier.

Was it a human skull or was it the skull of some man-like creature that walked on California soil a million years ago? Indian lore tells us that there were creatures that ruled here long before the Indians came. According to some, they are still here, lurking unseen by all but a few who have been lucky enough to spot a Bigfoot or Sasquatch.

One of these people was a prospector named Al Ostman who drifted into Vancouver with an incredible story. He had been sleeping in his sleeping bag a couple of weeks earlier in a remote area about 100 miles north of the city, when he was awakened to find himself being picked up off the ground. He was slung "like a sack of flour", he said, over the shoulder of a huge gorilla, who set off at a trot across the country. Shortly after day break, he was dropped on the ground and knocked out. When he regained consciousness, he found he had been taken out of his sleeping bag and was surrounded by a family of Sasquatch. The females were about seven feet tall and the males were almost a foot taller. Ostman said he was held captive for six days, confined in a small bowl-shaped canyon which had only one narrow exit. He escaped by giving the Bigfoot who was guarding him a tin of snuff, which caused him to sneeze violently, rolling on the ground in fits, thus allowing Ostman to escape. Ostman's story attracted little attention.

However, Roger Patterson a rancher from Yakima, Washington, attracted a great deal of attention when he was able to film a Sasquatch in action. Mr. Patterson whose avocation has been researching the legend of the Bigfoot, probably has the most complete collection of sightings in existance, and is the author of a book titled *Do Abominable Snowmen of America Really Exist?*

The film was shot in October 1967. Shortly before it was taken, a friend and fellow Bigfoot enthusiast called Patterson to report that tracks of recent origin had been found near Bluff Creek in Northern California. Patterson, accompanied by an expert tracker named Robert Gimlin, departed immediately for California, where for the next week-and-a-half they scouted the area, searching for some signs of the elusive humanoid. On the afternoon of October 20th, they rounded a bend in a canyon. Patterson's horse reared and as he brought the frightened animal under control, he spotted a Bigfoot.

"He was about 125 feet across a creek," he said. "Its head was human, although more slanted, with a large forehead and broad nostrils. Its hair was two to four inches long, and covered its entire body except for the face and around the nose, mouth and cheek. And it was a female. It had large pendulous breasts."

It moved slowly across a sandbar, but Patterson just had time to get out his motion picture camera and start shooting. He had time to use up a 25 ft. roll before the Sasquatch ambled into some woods nearby and disappeared.

Patterson next made plaster casts of the tracks and covered the rest with tree bark, so as to preserve them for study by the experts. One of the experts was Robert Titmus, of Kitimat, British Columbia, who measured the tracks. After a close examination, he pronounced that the tracks were undoubtedly *not* a hoax, and furthermore they were the tracks of an animal that was completely unfamiliar to him. The tracks were humanoid in shape and from the depth, Titmus estimated that the "thing" weighed between six and eight hundred pounds. By measuring objects around the photographed area, then triangulating the measurements, everyone came to the same conclusion, this Sasquatch was seven feet tall.

Was the Giant of the Awahaneechees a Sasquatch? If you recall, the mummy found in Yosemite was 6 foot 8 inches which represented a height in life of seven feet. Was the mummy a Sasquatch, or are the Sasquatches the evolved ancestors, or mutated ancestors, of the mummy of the Yosemite.

Was the skull found in Calavaras County the forerunner of both of these species, one of which vanished completely and the other, forced to go back to the ancient ways of the forest hiding forever from Man? Was it mankind who destroyed them both?

The facts are there and they are undeniable. The conclusions are and must as always be—yours. ○

The skull probably had been "buried" near the end of the Pliocene era—a million years earlier.

"A giant came into the valley long before the white man arrived" ..... Awahneechee Folklore

"There is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out."
William Shakespeare